Procurement of such huge quantities of wheat and rice would necessitate a total ban on private trade in the country and operation of only Government procurement system. Since procurement of rice and wheat cannot be organized at such a level, their imports will become necessary. Also the scale of issue will accordingly have to be reduced.

Further, in order to manage the level of food subsidy, the issue prices of rice and wheat will have to be increased substantially from the present Central Issue Prices (CIPs) which have not been revised during the last seven to nine years. This would also mean that BPL and AAY families would end up not only getting much reduced scale of issue but also have to pay higher CIPs.

Pending sugarcane dues of farmers in Uttar Pradesh

1738. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the current position in respect of amount of sugarcane arrears mill owners owe to the farmers in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether the arrears have declined in the last one year or so;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the sugarcane arrears is one deterrent factor which discourages farmers from cultivation of sugarcane;

(e) whether Government proposes to intervene with a view to compel mill owners to clear the arrears within a time bound framework; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) The status of cane price arrears payable, as on 31.10.2009, by the sugar mill owners to the sugarcane farmers was as under:

Sugar season	Cane price arrears (Rs. in Crore)
2008-09	2.69
2007-08	10.52
2006-07 and earlier	70.12
TOTAL	83.33

(b) and (c) The cane price arrears for the sugar season 2007-08 have declined from Rs.144.58 Crores as on 31.10.2008 to Rs.10.52 Crores as on 31.10.2009. Similarly the cane price arrears for the sugar season 2006-07 and earlier have also declined from Rs.138.46 Crores as on 31.10.2008 to Rs.70.12 Crores as on 31.10.2009. The higher domestic prices of sugar in 2008-09 season have improved the financial capacity of sugar mills enabling them to clear the outstanding cane price arrears.

(d) High sugarcane arrears in one of the factors which could discourage the farmers from cultivation of sugarcane.

(e) and (f) The Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 contains the necessary provisions for timely payment of cane price to the cane growers for the sugarcane supplied by them to the sugar mills.

Foodgrains to each household

1739. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would ensure that no one goes hungry and will provide 35 kg. of foodgrain per month to each household that would cost a little more than 2 per cent of GDP while given largesse nearly Rs. 3 lakh crores as tax benefits and other concessions to corporate over the past year;

(b) whether Government is aware that inadequate and even worsening conditions of nutrition have made India among the worst nutrition indicators in the world; and

(c) if so, the reasons why there is persistent increase in food prices resulting in reducing the ability of many more households to access sufficient food?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) Targeted Public Distribution System is focused on poor families as estimated by Planning Commission. Government of India allocates foodgrains at rate of 35 kg. per Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) family per month at subsidized prices. The State/Union Territory (UT) Governments have to deliver these foodgrains to eligible BPL and AAY ration card holders. For Above Poverty Line (APL) category of ration card holders, Central Government allocates foodgrains to States/UTs at the rate of 10 to 35 kg. per family per month. However, in order to protect the vulnerable sections, the Central Issue Prices for rice and wheat have remained unchanged for the last 7-9 years and are as given below:

	BPL	AAY	APL
Rice (Rs. per kg.)	5.65	3.00	8.30
Wheat (Rs. per kg.)	4.15	2.00	6.10

However, it is not possible to allocate foodgrains at the rate of 35 kg. per APL family per month for all APL households.

(b) As reported by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, level of malnutrition among children in India is high.

(c) The rise in prices of foodgrains is due to a number of factors such as growing demand